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GRANNY KANDIKI'S VISITORS

Once upon a time, there lived three baby hares in a little tent-house under a big cedar tree.

One day, they suddenly heard a "G-r-r-r-r, R-r-r-r-r" coming towards their house.

"And now, baby hares for my dinner! G-r-r-r-r, R-r-r-r".

It was Old Glutton. His fur was dark along his back and brown round the sides, and he had strong paws and sharp teeth.

Nearer and nearer he came: "G-r-r-r-r, R-r-r-r-r."

The little hares scrambled up the poles to the chimney hole and crawled outside. They sat on top of their house and made fun of the glutton:





"Yah! Old Man Crooked Legs, Old Hairy-Ears, Patchwork Back."

Old Glutton looked up at the hares and opened his mouth wide.

"New for my dinner! "

But the three hares broke off a lot of cedar twigs and flung them straight into Old Glutton's mouth. "A-a-a-a-tish, a-a-a-a-tishoo," he sneezed.

He wiped his eyes with his front paws and scratched his head with his back leg.

And the little hares jumped down and ran to Granny Kandiki's house.

She was a hunter and lived all on her own in the forest. The hares ran into her house and looked around but there was no one in. Granny was out hunting. The hares looked in the cooking-pot and ate up all Granny's food. Suddenly they heard "swish, swish". It was Granny Kandiki hurrying home on her skis.

The three little hares were frightened and jumped into the empty cooking-pot.

The old woman came in and said: "Come over here, wood! Light yourself up, fire! "

The wood came into the house all on its own, and the fire started up.

"Bucket, go and get some water! "

The bucket staggered back with some water.

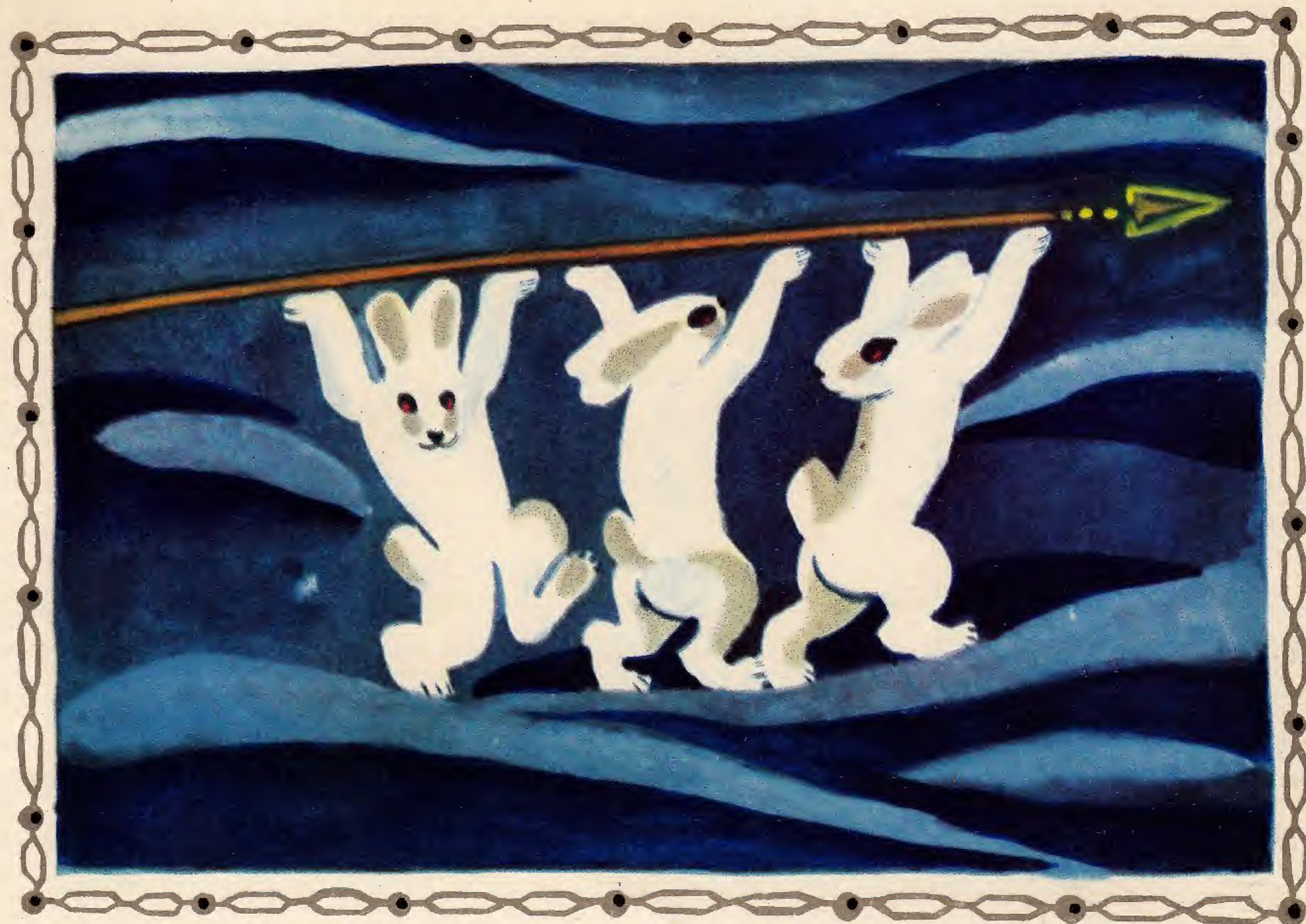
"Cooking-pot! Come here! "

"Ching! " said the pot, but couldn't move an inch. The old woman got angry and started hitting the pot with a stick.

The three little hares thought that was funny and burst out laughing.

The old woman glanced in the pot and smiled when she saw her visitors.

"Why are you hiding, my little friends? I'm tired of living here on my own. Stay, and we'll all live together."



So the little hares stayed. Granny Kandiki went out hunting and cooked the food, while the hares played all day at home and grew big and strong.

"Granny," they said one day, "we're growing up now, we're not babies any more. Give us your spear and we can go out and hunt too! "

"No," said Granny, "you can't do that because the forest is full of big, vicious animals."

But the naughty hares took no notice and one night, while Granny was asleep, took the spear and ran out of the house.

They came to a forest clearing and climbed onto a dry old tree-log and sang:



Ha-Ha-Ha!
Hee-Hee-Hee!
We are afraid of
NO-BOD-Y!
Ha-Ha-Ha!
What clever hares!
We're going to beat
The big bad bear!

The bear woke up and gave a loud roar. The hares dropped their spear, jumped down and ran off! The bear crawled out of his lair, picked up the spear and hurled it after the hares. But they had already gone a long way and the spear only grazed their ears.

They ran home to Granny Kandiki and jumped onto her tree-bark basket and sang:

Ha-Ha-Ha!
What clever hares!
We have beaten
The big bad bear!

"Children! " she laughed. "Who's been blackening your ears then? "

Oh, how those little hares trembled! They remembered that the bear had nearly killed them with the spear! They scrambled off the basket and hid under Granny's skirts.

Granny's fur coat was lovely and warm. The little hares trembled a while and then got nice and warm and fell asleep. And they slept and slept, did our little black-eared hares.

When they woke up, they tried washing their ears with snow and pine-needles. But it was no use! Nothing would get them clean. And so the tips of their ears remained black from that day to this.





THE LAUGHING BEAR

One day, Bear was wandering through the forest, sniffing around for snails and eating raspberries, wild strawberries and bilberries.

Suddenly he came across Fox, who asked:

"Hey there! Do you know of anyone more cunning than Fox? "

"Yes. Me! I'm more cunning than you," answered Bear.

"Right then—just try and trick me! " said Fox.

"Fine! I bet you my new coat that I'm more cunning than you! "

And the bear sat down, resting his head on his paw and started thinking hard: "What can I do that's extra cunning? "



Suddenly Fox cried out:

"Look, Bear! There's a hunter on a spotted deer riding towards us! "

Bear jumped up in surprise.

"Where? Where? "

And he ran off so quickly that his back legs leaped in front of his forelegs.

"Take it easy, old man! " shouted Fox after him. "Can you really see a hunter? "

Bear looked around. And, sure enough, there was neither hunter nor deer.

"Ha-ha-ha! " laughed Bear. "Ho-ho-ho."

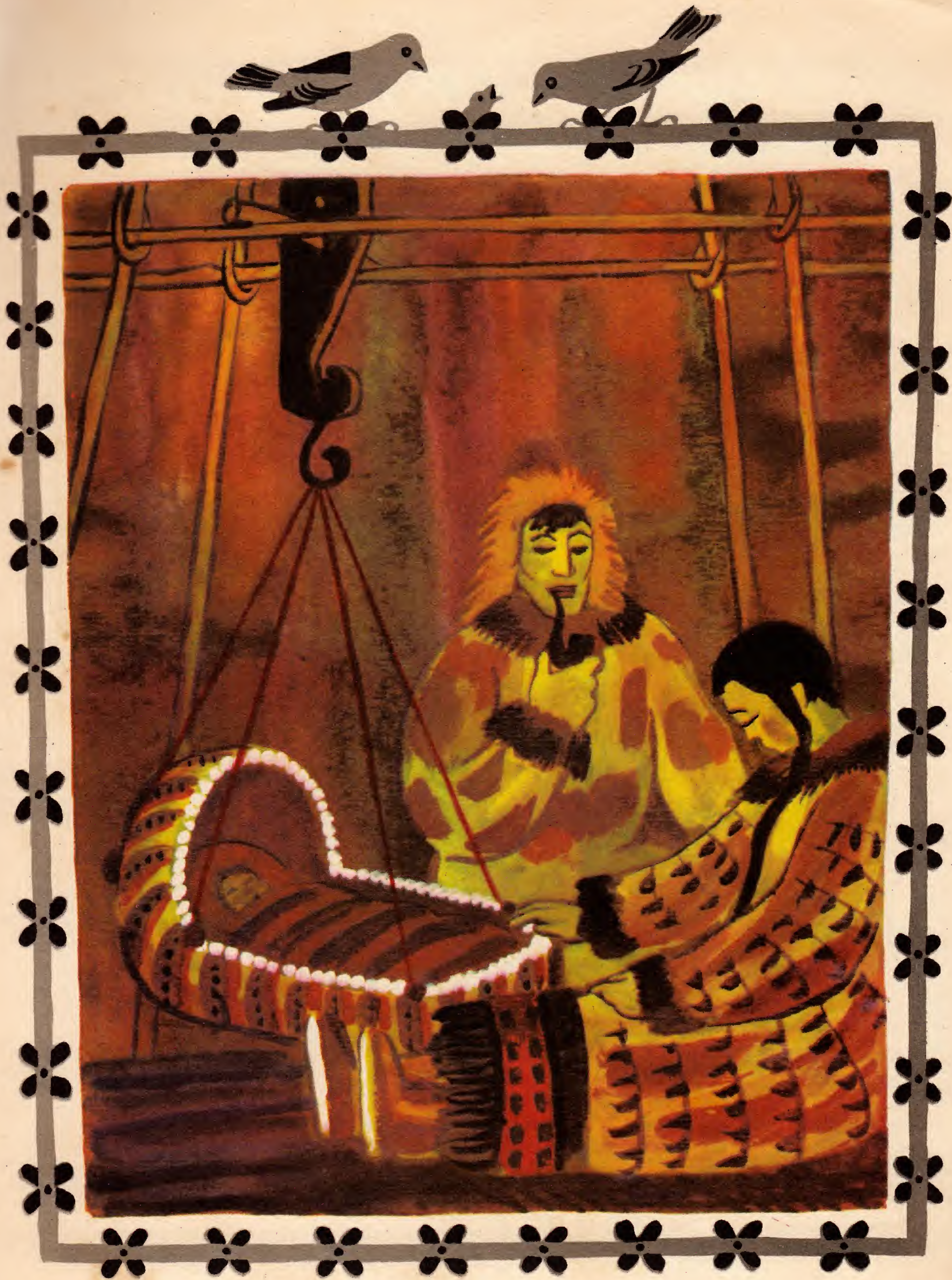
"How easily-fooled you are, old man," said Fox, and Bear gave him his coat, with an otter skin as a bonus. And Bear laughed about it for five whole days:

"There was neither hunter nor deer and there was I, running like mad. Is there anyone in this forest who can run faster than Old Bear? "

When he'd laughed to his heart's content, Bear wandered off into the thick of the forest, found himself a nice, dry den and lay down to sleep for the whole winter.

Our friend Bear doesn't need a coat now, nor an otter skin either. He's sleeping peacefully under the snow, snuggled up in his own, warm bear-skin.







THE RAVEN AND THE SNOW-BUNTING

In springtime, long ago, two white snow-buntings came flying to the Arctic tundra. They built a nest on a rock and the female laid an egg.

Soon the little fledgling pecked through the egg-shell. But as soon as he left the shell, the 'snow-buntings' little son started crying. The mother sang her only son a lullaby: "Whose feet are these, whose wings? Whose eyes are these, whose head? "

But Baby Bunting went on crying even more bitterly:

"Ki-i-i-i-i-i-"

"Cheep-cheep, tseep-tseep!" said Father. "I'll sing to him now." He took his pipe out of his mouth and started singing: "Whose *little* feet are these, whose *little* wings? Whose *little* eyes are these, whose *little* head?"

The baby bird laughed happily and fell fast asleep.

Father flew off to get some food and Mother stayed in the nest, singing the song.

Suddenly, a big black raven came and heard the song.

"Give me your song!" he demanded.

"No!"

"Give it me, d'you hear-r-r!"

"I can't give it you. Our son won't sleep without it."

"Well, if you're not going to give it me, then I'll gr-r-rab it!" And he grabbed the song and flew away.

Baby woke up and started crying again. And, oh dear! His poor Mum burst into tears as well.

At last Father came home.

"What's the matter? Why are you both crying?"

"A Raven came and took our song!"

Father frowned. "Give me my hunting gear," he said, "I'll go and look for our song!"

He put on his fur hat, slipped his knife and his tobacco pouch in his leather belt, took his hunting gloves and bow and arrow and announced:

"I'm off!"

He ran swiftly across the plain and then opened his wings and started flying. Up he soared into the sky, then down he swooped and peered at the ground. At last he came to a valley between two hills and spied a settlement of ravens.... He hid behind a rock, took his bow from his shoulder, and put an arrow tipped with a sharpened stone in position. Then he sat and listened—whichever raven sang his song he would shoot with an arrow!

The ravens chatted among themselves: "Kooo-kooo-kooo," grumbled the old ones.

"Kar-kay, kar-kay," laughed the young ravens. And their girl-friends answered: "Kee-kee-kee...."

Then our Snow-Bunting noticed one big raven sitting on top of a tent made of animal-skins. His eyes were closed, he was nodding his head and swaying and he kept unfurling and furling his tail feathers.



And he sang and sang:

"Whose l-i-i-i-t-t-l-e feet are these, whose l-i-i-i-t-t-l-e wings?
Whose l-i-i-i-t-t-l-e eyes are these, whose l-i-i-i-t-t-l-e head? "

And up and down went his tail in time to the song.

Father Snow-Bunting shot an arrow and hit the Raven in the tail.

The Raven moaned in pain, but kept on singing the song
"What l-i-i-i-t-t-l-e feet! A-h-h-h-h! "

So our brave Father kept on shooting, but each time he was
hit, the Raven only moaned and carried on singing; "Ah! little
eyes.... A-g-g-gh-h-h-h! Whose little wings are these.... O-o-o-h!
What's pinching me in the back? Whose l-i-i-i-t-t-l-e head is this? ...
O-o-o-h! A-g-g-g-h-h-h-h! "

He opened his eyes and saw the Snow-Bunting.

"I've come for my song! " said Father Snow-Bunting, shot his
last arrow, took his song and flew off.

When he arrived home he said:

"Please take off my hunting gear, and dry my fur hat and
gloves—they got wet through with sweat. And hang up my bow

in its place of honour. I've won back our stolen song. Here it is—listen! " and he started singing.

And so, to this day, the snow-buntings sing their song. But when they see the shadow of the black raven over their nest, they stop singing. And little Baby Bunting is as quiet as a mouse—he knows he mustn't cry.

And the Bunting family lived happily ever after with their song. So, children, you'd better not cry. If you do, maybe a raven'll come and fly off with your mummy's song!

